1. Describe your overall goals and approach to address identified community issues, needs, and interests through your station’s vital local services, such as multiplatform long and short-form content, digital and in-person engagement, education services, community information, partnership support, and other activities, and audiences you reached or new audiences you engaged.

Our goal is to remain the primary, trustworthy source for our community to go to in regard to what’s going on locally, nationally, and internationally—with a primary focus on local. We’re committed to staying technically ahead of the game by utilizing every new communication platform that arises so that we stay an informed, connected community who relies on KPBC to make that a reality. That means, for us, the airwaves, our streaming service, our public appearances, our community partnerships, our social media presence, our leadership in the local nonprofit network, our special events, and our CAB’s work, are all critical for us to be able to connect with the community and meet its needs.

Our first point of contact with the community at large centers on our news department. Consistently, over the years, local news has been identified as the thing that people in the community rely on and expect from KMXT; top quality local news, talk shows, local government coverage, and Alaskan statewide news coverage. We have budgeted for two professional journalists in the news department on staff and are committed to maintaining our department at two for as long as we can afford it. After another tumultuous year that was a combination of Covid and health issues, we’re unfortunately scrambling to get back to being fully staffed again. We’re currently operating with only one young cub reporter and a part-timer who was supposed to be coming in last summer to fill in as the GM’s replacement while he took a sabbatical but was converted to news. We’re hoping to return to full staffing by early summer.

Secondly, we use our CAB’s identification of quarterly issues along with input from our news team to identify areas/issues we need to focus on when developing local content. As a staff we sit down and discuss what’s going on around town and what’s crucial for us to be involved in and often this process takes into account input we get from locals who’ve contacted us in any of the multitude of ways available to them to get in touch: in person, phone calls, email, Facebook, text, web messages. In a small town like Kodiak, it’s not hard getting people to contact us about getting some attention directed at something they think is important. We then strategize about how best to deal with the issues identified, be in through a simple story, a series of stories, a half-hour talk show, a dedicated regular program or something best addressed through social media.

Our CAB has continued meeting through Zoom during the pandemic but they’re finding it a bit challenging. We have, however, gotten significant feedback from the public in regard to our pandemic programming and feel like we’re doing a good job addressing the community issues that have arisen so far and are moving forward with a couple of new suggestions we’ve gotten from the CAB and the public.

We’ve recently just started up our community calendar on our website again. We’d only used it sparingly during the past year due to the dearth of community events happening. It’s starting to pick up. Some of our bigger successes this past year:

• The Baby Bunker. A weekly kid’s program designed to appeal to young listeners and stay-at-home caregivers who were trapped in their houses, looking for something to break up the week.

• Emergency Operations Meetings. At least once a week, since April, we’ve been airing a local update from our ESC to let people know what’s happening locally in regard to the pandemic.

• Expanded Government Meeting Broadcasts. As everyone went remote the need arose for a way citizens could participate in our local government meetings. We added special meetings and the local work sessions (something we normally don’t broadcast) to allow public participation.

• Partnered with the School District to do special events and graduations.

• Partnered with virtually every nonprofit in town to give them a voice during the pandemic.

2. Describe key initiatives and the variety of partners with whom you collaborated, including other public media outlets, community nonprofits, government agencies, educational institutions, the business community, teachers and parents, etc. This will illustrate the many ways you’re connected across the community and engaged with other important organizations in the area.

Once Covid began taking over the States in late February we made a concerted effort to focus most of our energies covering what was going on and made a conscious decision to create programs and programming opportunities that would make our station “the place to go” for people looking for the best information. We spent an inordinate amount of time, originally, doing that with our reporters with news pieces and talk shows and that eventually evolved into a full-time effort on the part of all of our small staff to supplement straight news with a multitude of other special programming. That led to a huge expansion in our normal partnerships above and beyond what we normally do with them because we found ourselves in the unique position of being the only voice into the community many of them had to be able to get their messages and information out when people were no longer out and about like normal.

A. The Lowdown. We started a daily talk show in March and brought in a wide array of folks inside the community and out to talk about what was going on, how the community was going to be effected, and what they should prepare for. Doctors, lawyers, mental health professionals, cannery operators, pilots, teachers, nonprofit leaders, local government officials and business professionals. We’re still running a “doctor edition” weekly that’s kind of like Car Talk with doctors. It became the “must listen” thing to do in the community for months.

B. School District Special Events. Early on in the pandemic it became apparent that the kids were really going to take a beating from not being able to finish out their year normally and all those activities that they were working on were going to go away without some help. We immediately brought in the administrators and offered our airwaves for whatever they needed us for. We started doing live music programs. We moved to doing plays and community sing-a-longs and then moved into hosting all of the graduations.
C. The Baby Bunker. The stay-at-home caregivers were struggling for content and for a break in their day. We knew we had a lot of local talent itching for something to do so we created a weekly kid’s program they could look forward to every week. Stories, music and science projects read, played or created by local volunteers.

D. Non Profit Specials. We spent a lot of time during The Lowdown bringing in members of just about every nonprofit in town to let them let the community know what they could still offer, what they needed and how people could help. We had representatives from over 30 groups come in at least once to let them tell their story.

Minority Specials. Also, during The Lowdown, we partnered up with representatives from the Alutiiq, Filipino and Hispanic communities to let them talk about what was going on within their communities during the pandemic and how listeners could help.

3. What impact did your key initiatives and partnerships have in your community? Describe any known measurable impact, such as increased awareness, learning or understanding about particular issues. Describe indicators of success, such as connecting people to needed resources or strengthening conversational ties across diverse neighborhoods. Did a partner see an increase in requests for related resources? Please include direct feedback from a partner(s) or from a person(s) served.

Our partnerships this year continued to be along the lines of years past. The station provides the only local news coverage via the airwaves to our community and the outlying communities of the Kodiak Island Archipelago. We provide emergency broadcast coverage to those areas as well and that coverage, in the past, has become of key importance when it comes to funding from local governments. It is still key as, just this year, we had two large earthquakes nearby, creating potential tsunami events. Our listeners always tell us how important our live broadcasts during those events are to them – our station is a source of important information about evacuations, timelines, and more. We are always surprised by comments from listeners from far away during these times, too. “I really appreciate your team’s calm, professional coverage during the 10/19/20 tsunami coverage. We were listening from Columbus, OH,” stated a donor in October. Another donor, a local, said “Really appreciate the thoughtful, kind, and calm broadcasting during recent natural disasters.” She went on to say “Love to listen in the morning and on the way home!”

Like every other public radio station across the country, our partnerships became increasingly important resources as we headed into the pandemic. In March we started a daily news show called The Lowdown where we brought in guests across a wide spectrum to bring the community information about COVID-19 and it’s impacts here in the community. Here listeners found information about what was happening in the school district, college, businesses, food and supplies being shipped to the island and more. Businesses could tune in to learn details about resources being made available to them, or what current mandates and emergency orders impacted them and how. Our partnerships with organizations like the City and Borough governments, the Emergency Services Council, the school district, medical and mental health providers, nonprofit organizations such as the Brother Francis Shelter for the homeless, the
Kodiak Women’s Resource and Crisis Center were critical. We provided an important information resource for the community they could tune into on a daily basis. One listener wrote “I want to thank you for the informative Lowdown COVID-19 coverage. I am aware that like many, you are suffering financially due to the virus. It isn’t much, but enclosed is $50.00 to help keep you on the air. Sincerely, David A. S.”

The Lowdown continued for months as a daily show. Later in the summer it transitioned to one day per week, featuring local physicians discussing the latest COVID-19 research, treatments, vaccine efficacy and availability, and more. The show continues today on a weekly basis. The partnership with the physicians and their individual clinics will likely continue beyond the pandemic – all have expressed an interest in continuing a show about public health issues of local importance.

We continue to partner with the local nonprofits and are actively involved in a network of nonprofits – organizing monthly or bi-monthly meetings. Again, during the early stages of the pandemic and shutdowns, these meetings were an important information-sharing resource for the nonprofits.

Our partnerships also took an unusual turn because of the virus, too. Schools and organizations looked to us to broadcast special events such as the eighth grade graduation celebration, the elementary school Moving on Up celebration, and the high school graduation ceremony. The elementary students from all schools had been practicing for months for their large stage production of some of the music from Jungle Book just before the community went into lockdown. We worked with the music teacher, recorded the music and her intros and students all over town dressed up in their costumes and sang and danced along in their living rooms, front yards, on their decks and porches while grandparents and friends watched from their cars. Not exactly hard news, but an important service during tough times? Yes.

We even partnered with stations in other communities in coastal Alaska, providing broadcast and streaming bandwidth for them to get important COVID-19 information and requirements to fisherman who would soon be coming to their communities for the commercial season openers.

We continued our tradition of a Valentine’s Day campaign to benefit the Kodiak Women’s Resource and Crisis Center. The agency gives us a list of items needed to help families settle into new living situations or for the families staying at the Center for the time being. We use the airwaves and social media to encourage the community to bring those items to the station and we distribute them to the Center on Valentine’s Day.

We also have a program called The Giving Tree around the Christmas holiday that benefits the Brother Francis Shelter and Kodiak Women’s Resource and Crisis Center. Both agencies give us a list of things needed by their clientele. Those lists range from warm clothes, hats and mittens
to toys and games. We put the list of items on ornaments on a Christmas tree in our entryway and encourage our listeners and social media followers to stop by, pick up a couple of ornaments, shop for the items, and bring them back to the station labeled and wrapped. The organizations come by on Christmas Eve to pick up the gifts for their clients. Kodiak continues to be very generous with this program - even in the midst of a pandemic.

KMXT is proud to serve the diverse Kodiak Island Archipelago, which, in addition to the standard mix of American ethnicities, is primarily comprised of three distinct ethnic groups; Alaska Natives, Filipinos, and Latinos. Our Community Advisory Board has been integral in reaching out to and engaging with these audiences, by listening to community members from these different ethnic groups and advising on the stations’ programming accordingly. We continued to broadcast programming geared towards this diverse audience, with programs like Indigenous in Music, National Native News, Native Voices Calling, Global Village, The Putumayo World Music Hour and the Alutiiq Word of the Week, along with numerous news pieces telling the stories of these diverse communities. Also, not having volunteers in the building for the last year has allowed us to add a couple hours of Spanish language programming to our schedule on Monday nights and an additional native program over the weekend.

We, of course, were pretty challenged this past year focusing on anything other than pandemic programming. We did have a couple of highlights, however, of what we did in regard to our pandemic coverage that demonstrated our commitment to serving these segments of our population.

- We created specific PSA’s, in conjunction with local governments, the canneries and the Emergency Services Organization, in Spanish and Tagalog that were Covid-related.
- We brought in a variety of guests from the Alutiiq Museum, the Fil-Am society, the local ethnic churches, job services, Alaska Legal Services, reps from the local governments out in our villages, and reps from our local canneries who talked about a variety of issues affecting the minority communities.
- Through it all we continued our partnership producing the Alutiiq Word of the Week

PLANS: We haven’t updated these since last years but they remain goals for the year ahead:

- Get the CAB to do more structured outreach and utilize social media more to connect
- Work with the college and KHS on developing a better role in the ESL program
- Work more with the Fil-Am Society and Filipino churches
5. Please assess the impact that your CPB funding had on your ability to serve your community. What were you able to do with your grant that you wouldn’t be able to do if you didn’t receive it?

Bottom line: We’d be making plans to start talking merger with some of the other Alaskan stations knowing we were going to be looking at becoming a repeater stations sometime in the very near future.

As you all are probably well aware, after sustaining years of attacks against our funding at the State level, the current administration first cut our State funding in half a few years ago (a loss, to us, of a little over $77K from around a $500K budget). Then, a few years ago, utilizing a veto that our legislature was unable to override, our funding was completely zeroed out. Our Governor did, when the pandemic was first starting to really gain a foothold in the State, publicly tout public broadcasting’s value to our State and local communities in helping to get information out and vowed to get us “even more money than we lost from the State” through CARES funding, he never came through with dedicated funding to us and left each station’s funding up to the whims of each local community to decide how they should spend their bypass CARES funding. The current administration, clearly in opposition to overwhelming support from the Alaskan people who’ve expressed their support for funding public broadcasting year after year during public hearings, remains committed to never funding us for broadcasting and underfunding us for emergency services. That said, we were going in to this fiscal year already having to overcome that huge hit we’d taken over the past three years. At a bare minimum, to keep things at the same operational level without accounting for inflation, we were already looking to try and raise another $77 to $100K in local earned income. We’d just barely started and people started to respond to the governor’s cuts when the pandemic hit and pretty much dried up most of our earned income sources. We’d just be managing to project out having the same basic operation for at least the next 5 years or so while we sought to overcome the revenue drop as long as we tapped some of our reserves as long as we could rely on the CPB base grant to keep us afloat. So, without the pandemic rearing its ugly head, we were looking at a tough couple of years but without the CPB grant—we’d be throwing in the towel. Your funding accounts for roughly 20 to 25% of our budget and our salaries account for between 55 and 60% of our budget. We’re already running way short on personnel and scrambling to accomplish everything we have to do (at less than market salaries). Losing CPB funding means 2 or 3 people—people who either are dedicated to providing news (our lifeblood) or raising money. A devil’s dilemma. We’d really have no choice but to look for a partner who’d be willing to send signal into our community, maintain all the infrastructure and, maybe, either keep a reporter or two on the ground to provide some content or try and cover the community remotely.

Beyond the above, the CARES funding we got from CPB is helping us keep afloat. We lost underwriting support. We lost all of our special event revenue. We lost an enormous amount of gaming revenue and we incurred a tremendous amount of Covid expenses we had to spring for so we could meet the community’s needs for information during the pandemic. Thank you.